



# INNOVATE

2023-24  
Senior Vice  
Chancellor  
Report



# A MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

I am proud and optimistic as we review this year's accomplishments. Higher education's value and future are more important than ever. Between rising costs, stagnant revenues, and shifting public perception of the value of a college degree, universities across the nation are dealing with a perfect storm of challenges. Our commitment to meeting the evolving needs of modern learners and workforce development has never been stronger.

UNO stands at the forefront, positioned to address these challenges and opportunities through the framework of the UNO Core. We are dedicated to providing an inclusive and accessible education for all, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed and thrive. Our commitment to research and discovery drives innovation and knowledge creation, contributing to advancements that benefit our community and the broader world. We actively engage with our community, fostering development and forming partnerships that enhance the social, cultural, and economic fabric of our region. By aligning our educational offerings with the needs of the workforce, we play a critical role in driving economic development and preparing our students for successful careers.

UNO's future is bright and we have tremendous momentum around six strategic initiatives that will shape our journey forward.

- Reforming general education.
- Reviewing program vitality and auditing academic performance.
- Expanding experiential learning opportunities in and with our community.
- Recruiting and retaining exceptional faculty.
- Growing strategic areas of the university.
- Expanding international student enrollments and global partnerships.

I am proud of the work being done at UNO. Our faculty, staff, and students drive our success, and their dedication inspires me daily. Together, we are building a university that meets today's challenges and shapes tomorrow's opportunities.

**Thank you for your support and commitment to UNO. Our future is indeed bright, and I am excited about what we will achieve together.**



*Phil He, Ph.D.  
Senior Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs*

*'97 Criminology &  
Criminal Justice Ph.D.*





# UNO CORE

UNO is an urban public research university educating people of the world. We innovate for the public good through pragmatic and impactful research and discovery. We advance the social and economic mobility of our learners and serve our communities through inclusion rather than exclusion. We assume responsibility for workforce and economic development within our state and beyond. We devote each day to transforming lives.

## EDUCATING ALL LEARNERS



UNO is an urban public research university educating people of the world.

## RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY



We innovate for the public good through pragmatic and impactful research and discovery.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND PARTNERSHIPS



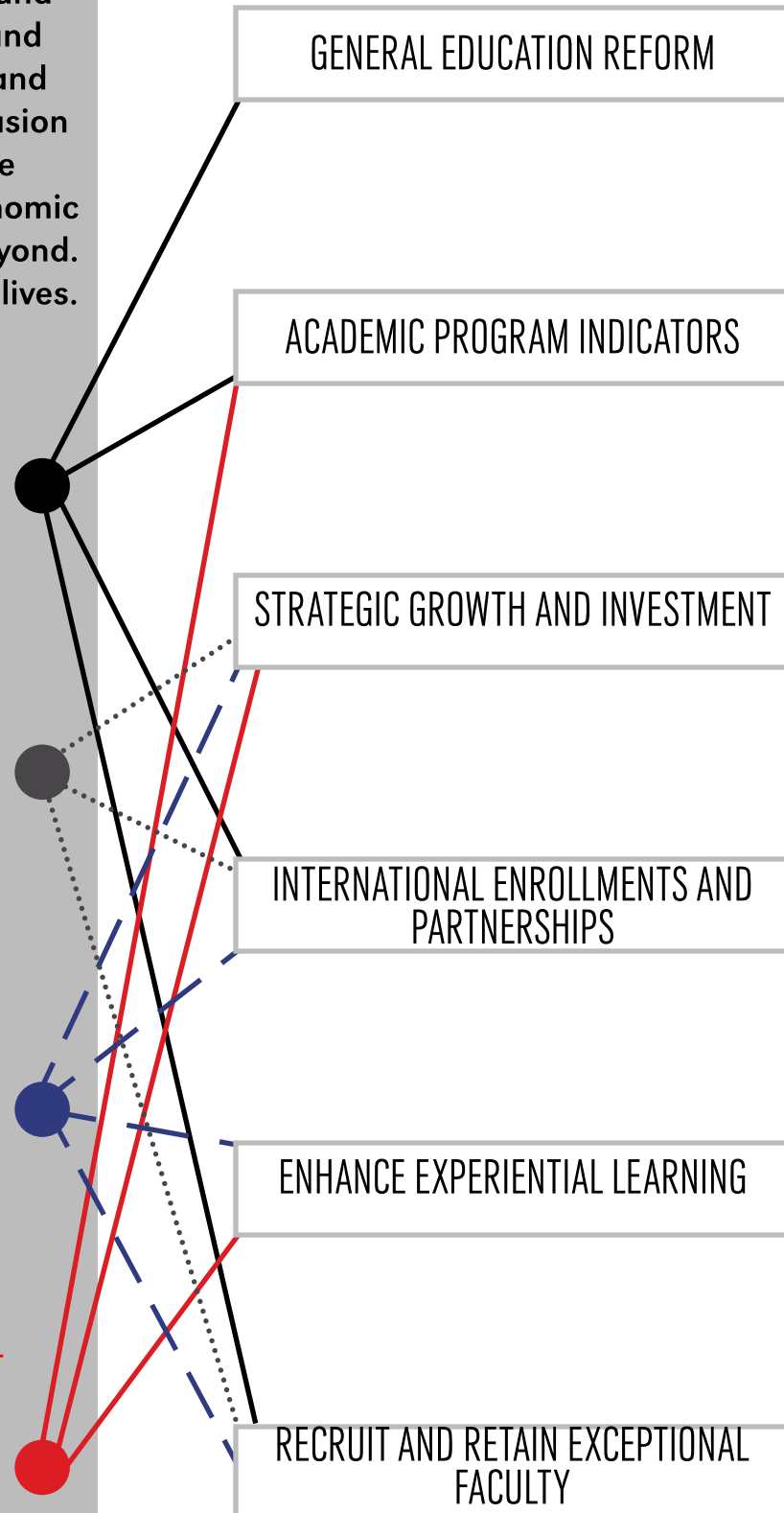
We advance the social and economic mobility of our learners and serve our communities through inclusion rather than exclusion.

## WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



We assume responsibility for workforce and economic development within our state and beyond.

# ACADEMIC AFFAIRS INITIATIVES



# ACADEMIC AFFAIRS INITIATIVES

## GENERAL EDUCATION REFORM

Reform general education by reducing credit hour requirements and making transfer more seamless to better serve the needs of our students.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM INDICATORS

Develop a robust approach to monitoring and assessing academic program trends and auditing the performance of academic programs.

## STRATEGIC GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

Identify and grow strategic areas of the university in ways that align with the pillars of the UNO Core including examples such as:

- Aviation and professional flight program
- NCITE research and academic programming
- Programming for adult learners
- Biomechanics research profile expansion

## INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Growth of international student population and global partnerships.

## ENHANCE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Enhance and expand experiential learning opportunities across disciplines and in partnership with the community.

## RECRUIT AND RETAIN EXCEPTIONAL FACULTY

Develop and implement a strategy to recruit and retain an exceptional and diverse faculty body.

# UNO STUDENTS

UNO's role is to serve as a point of access for excellence in higher education in our city, state, and region. All learners who have done the hard work of preparation are welcome, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or country of origin.

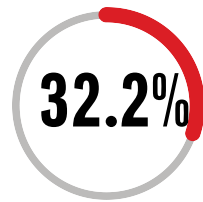
**15,015**



Total enrollment including undergraduate and graduate students Fall 2023



Of UNO students are first-time freshman



Of UNO student population is ethnically diverse



**11,859**

Undergraduate Enrollment

**3,156**

Graduate Enrollment



**10,993**

Full-time



**4,022**

Part-time



**12,530**

Full-time Equivalent

**336**

student-athletes competed during Fall 2023

**85%**

of student-athletes earned a 3.0 GPA or higher for the semester

**49%**

of student-athletes made the Dean's List (3.5 GPA) or the Chancellor's List (4.0 GPA).



## Residency Status



**12,682**

Nebraska Residents



**1,005**

Omaha Urban Rate (OUR) Residents



**788**

International Students



**2,996 Graduates**  
in 2023-2024



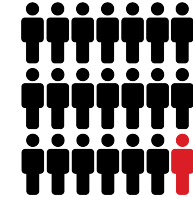
# UNO FACULTY EXCELLENCE

UNO students learn from distinguished faculty who are experts in their fields of study. Faculty are fully invested in students and their success, providing a personalized higher education experience.

**632**

Full-time faculty in 2023-24 (F23)

Undergraduate



Student-to-faculty ratio

Graduate



Student-to-faculty ratio



## 2024 NU System's Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creativity Award recipient Phani Tej Adidam.

Throughout his 27 years at UNO, Adidam has elevated business education with innovative teaching techniques. He introduced new undergraduate concentrations, including international business, and played a key role in redesigning the MBA and Executive MBA curricula. A recipient of UNO's Excellence in Teaching Award and the UNO Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award, Adidam has also published over 40 research papers in distinguished journals.

## FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023-24

**1,254**

Oral presentations, keynote addresses, poster presentations, etc.

**36**

Theatre-related activities including performances, scenic design, and directing/managing productions

**640**

Scholarly journal publications in academic outlets

**277**

Musical performances or conducting

**36**

Books published (includes new books and revised editions)

**62**

Art shows/exhibitions





# INNOVATIONS AND CROSS-COLLABORATIONS

"Innovation in higher education is not a solitary endeavor but a collective journey. Cross-collaboration not only enriches the academic experience but also drives the breakthroughs that shape the future of higher education."

- Phil He, Ph.D., Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Discover UNO's Master of Science in **Data Science**, a flexible and innovative interdisciplinary program designed to elevate student's expertise in data analytics, machine learning, and business intelligence. A cross-college collaboration between the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business Administration, and the College of Information Science & Technology. Students complete the program in just 24 months while mastering data organization, visualization, and the creation of impactful data products. There are opportunities to collaborate with leading experts across business, IT, and mathematics, to prepare for leadership roles in today's data-driven world.



UNO's **Urban Health Opportunities Program (UHOP)** aims to strengthen the healthcare workforce by supporting students committed to serving underserved urban communities in Nebraska. Offering tuition assistance, mentorship from UNMC medical students, and MCAT prep, UHOP ensures scholars are well-prepared for medical school. Successful participants are guaranteed admission to UNMC's M.D. program, making it an exceptional pathway for aspiring physicians.



"I WILL REMEMBER THAT THERE IS ART TO MEDICINE AS WELL AS SCIENCE, AND THAT WARMTH, SYMPATHY, AND UNDERSTANDING MAY OUTWEIGH THE SURGEON'S KNIFE OR THE CHEMIST'S DRUG." HIPPOCRATIC OATH (MODERN VERSION)

UNO's **Medical Humanities** program offers a unique interdisciplinary approach to exploring the connections between health, culture, and society. Integrating perspectives from the humanities, social sciences, and arts, the program equips students to address complex issues in healthcare, such as ethics, wellness, and the human experience of illness. Ideal for those pursuing careers in healthcare, social work, or public health, this program fosters a deep understanding of the human side of medicine.

## NCITE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND EDUCATION CENTER

Since NCITE's founding in 2020, the center's upward trajectory has been consistent with the addition of more faculty, students, research projects, stakeholders, and partners. But this year's changes mark three foundational ways NCITE is aiming to make its work not just impactful but sustainable.



Gina Ligon  
Director of NCITE

### Achievements and Initiatives

A two-year research project, funded by a DHS CP3 grant, developed cutting-edge **chatbot technology** for threat reporting, leading to a 2024 patent and potential nationwide adoption, thanks to the collaboration of Criminologist **Erin Kearns, Ph.D.**, and IT Innovator **Joel Elson, Ph.D.**

Future **national security professionals** are fostered by employing and immersing students in various activities, funding 66 graduate assistantships since 2020, including 25 in the past year.

NCITE's second in-person conference in Omaha gathered **U.S. and European consortium partners** and featured prominent **counterterrorism voices** from the White House and Department of Homeland Security.

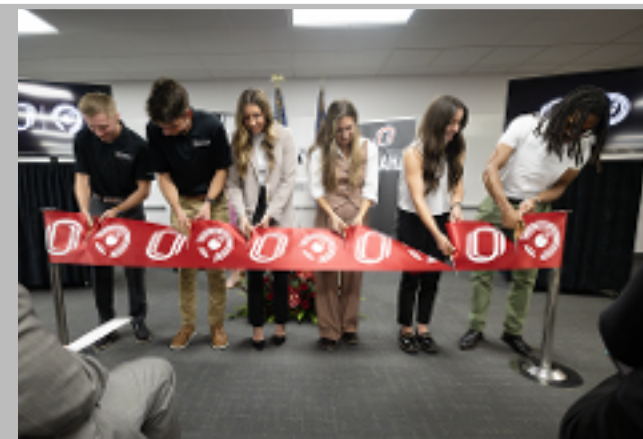
A new **Speaker Series** features national security leaders and academics discussing targeted violence, terrorism prevention, and sense-making.

Presentations were hosted in Omaha and Washington, D.C., on **workforce resilience**, as counterterrorism research and work is psychologically demanding.

A \$2 million grant was secured to develop **International Academic Partnerships for Science and Security (IAPSS)**, an information-sharing, workforce development enterprise for counterterrorism among allied countries.

Expanded communications now include the **"NCITE Insights"** podcast featuring consortium experts and an **election security resources** web page.

NCITE moved into the Scott Technology Center in the fall of 2023 allowing for the consolidation of students, faculty, and staff into one building. After renovations, University of Nebraska system leaders, Nebraska community leaders, NCITE's national security partners and over 200 guests gathered for the ribbon cutting celebration. The new headquarters offers this growing organization a larger and more secure space.





# COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

UNO's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) goes beyond providing students with the skills for today's job market. We provide students with an education that enriches their lives and fosters the analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills that will help them create the positions of tomorrow.

## Points of Pride

- To reach more learners, CAS is developing a **first-year experience course** intended to provide **academic and personal support** while helping students explore academic majors and programs.
- The Department of World Languages and Literature engaged the community through its first **Language Fair** reaching 300 area high school students.
- CAS facilitated over **60 internships and practicums** to connect students to the workforce.
- The Health Careers Resource Center sponsored the **Pre-Health symposium**, which hosted **1,200 high school juniors** with area businesses, non-profits organizations, and academic insitutation/programs.



In July 2024, Dr. Melanie Bloom became the first woman to lead the College of Arts and Sciences as Dean. Dr. Bloom, with a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, has been with UNO since 2005 and has held various leadership positions. She is praised for her experience, dedication, and vision, and is expected to further elevate the academic excellence of the college.

## NATO Model Event Held at UNO

NATO Allied Command Transformation facilitated a NATO Model Event at UNO. Students represented NATO member nations during a simulated North Atlantic Council session focused on the High North's geopolitical and climate challenges. This event, organized by UNO professors and supported by NATO staff, allowed students to research, negotiate, and reach consensus on NATO strategies. The event aimed to educate and engage students in NATO's decision-making processes, enhancing their understanding of the Alliance's roles and responsibilities.



## Endangered Bat Research

Dr. Han Li (Biology) and his team are researching endangered bat species to enhance conservation practices and raise public awareness. This study focuses on grassland bat foraging ecology and the impact of habitat loss and white-nose syndrome. In 2023, UNO found that the tricolored bat, proposed to be listed as endangered, preferred restored grasslands over agricultural lands. Acoustic data for other endangered bats were also collected. With the Wild Kingdom grant, UNO will expand its research to more sites.



## 4 Years, 5 Degrees

David Saenz Zuniga graduated in May 2024 with BA and BS degrees from CAS in five disciplines: International Studies (Global Strategic Studies concentration), Latino/Latin American Studies, World Languages (Spanish concentration), Economics, and Political Science (Foreign and National Security Affairs concentration). He also earned a minor in Geography.

## Opioid Research Addressing Current Limitations

Researchers in the CAS are tackling the US opioid epidemic from both a neuroscientific and public health perspective. With a grant from Peter F. McManus Charitable Trust Research Grants, Dr. Erik Garcia (Psychology) is hoping to identify new ways to mitigate opioid use disorder by addressing the limitations of current treatments.







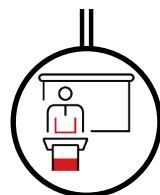
Dean Michelle Trawick, Ph.D.

# COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

CBA's nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate programs are creating the next generation of **Leaders, Entrepreneurs, Analysts, Decision-makers, Executives, Researchers, and Socially responsible citizens.** We are creating the **LEADERS** for Omaha, Nebraska, and beyond!



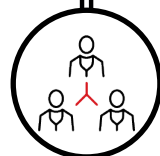
## Points of Pride



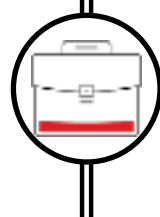
The **Economics Research Seminar** connected 163 unique community members including students, industry professionals, government officials, and faculty, fostering diverse insights through monthly sessions.



CBA's 2024 **summer camps** welcomed 39 high school students from across Nebraska to explore careers in banking, finance, accounting, real estate, and economics, with enrollment on track for 60 students next summer.



Career Services increased employer participation in the Fall and Spring **Career Fairs** from 50 to over 70, with a record attendance of over 425 students at the Fall Fair, increasing workforce associations.



The **EMBA program** now offers more flexibility to students with an updated curriculum to remain current with changing business trends and educational needs. Enrollment in the **MBA program** surged by 33%, addressing workforce demand by preparing more highly skilled professionals for leadership roles.

## 10 years of the CBA Capstone Cup

The Capstone Cup is a semester-long event for seniors to apply classroom knowledge to real-world business problems for Omaha companies. Students work in teams to research and present solutions, initially pitching to company leaders, local professionals, and industry experts. Finalists make a formal pitch and participate in a Q&A with community judges. Designed by Management Professors Erin Pleggenkuhle-Miles and Erin Bass, this flagship experience offers practical consulting experience for CBA students.



## Catherine Co completed a Fulbright Specialist Fellowship in Vietnam

Department of Economics Professor Catherine Y. Co is a strong advocate for the Fulbright Program. Dr. Co has completed two Fulbright Fellowships, a four-week assignment at the International School - Thai Nguyen University (ISTNU) in Vietnam as a Fulbright Specialist in 2023, and a 10-month assignment as a Fulbright U.S. Scholar in 2014-15 at International University - Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.




# COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES


CEHHS offers diverse undergraduate and graduate programs in areas like teacher preparation, counseling, biomechanics, public health, educational leadership, and special education. Its six innovative units develop dedicated practitioners, scholars, and citizens. The college's 24 programs support the campus's mission, address local workforce needs, and contribute through internationally recognized research. Students benefit from advanced facilities and community-partnered learning.





**"CEHHS is a caring college of servant leaders, that with our many partners on campus, in the community, and around the World, are preparing the next generation of servant leaders"**  
 - Dean Neal Grandgenett, Ph.D.

## Points of Pride

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The innovative **Teacher Scholars Academy**, part of the Department of Teacher Education, is working towards educating all by securing funding to support 38 new undergraduates per year, over the next 2-3 years.
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The Department of Educational Leadership held the Midwest's first two-day **Community Leadership & Education Summit** with nearly 1,000 attendees and an evening reception for local educational leaders.
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The **UNO Pitching Lab**, a collaboration of researchers in the **School of Health and Kinesiology** and the **Department of Biomechanics**, drew global athletes for analysis and received significant press during March Madness and the College World Series through interactive community engagement.
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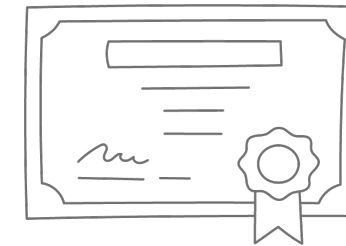
CEHHS students in the **Community Counseling Clinic** and the **Speech and Language Clinic** supported hundreds of community members with student-led services supervised by expert faculty.



**The Health Science Collaborative Facility**, supported by the School of Health and Kinesiology, nears completion with 32,000 square feet of advanced lab space opening in November 2024. These labs will enhance research in Exercise and Vascular Physiology, Sports Medicine, Early Childhood Development, and Physical and Intellectual Disabilities. The facility fosters student engagement, community-partnered research, and collaboration with national partners, equipping future clinicians, researchers, and practitioners to improve health outcomes.

The SECD department launched the fully online **Dyslexia Certificate**, a 15-18 hour graduate program with five new courses. Funded by private foundations, the first cohort includes 20 students. CEHHS is working closely with NUF for potential funders for an additional 47 graduates students from across Nebraska. The program also involves community dyslexia specialists to help students practice diagnosing and intervening with dyslexia.

**The Nebraska Literacy Project**, led by Dr. Jennifer Lemke, trains 6,000 K-3 teachers statewide in the Science of Reading over three years. Supported by the Departments of Teacher Education, Special Education, and Educational Leadership, the project offers a five-day hybrid professional development, resulting in a UNO micro-credential and either a stipend or CEHHS graduate course tuition. Involving many campus partners, it will reach 800 teachers in the first year.



## \$11M NIH Grant for Cardiovascular Research in Biomechanics

The Department of Biomechanics (BMCH), led by Dr. Alexey Kamenskiy, received an \$11M NIH grant to establish the Center for Cardiovascular Research in Biomechanics (CRiB) at UNO. CRiB will address cardiovascular disease challenges and enhance CEHHS' research capabilities. This effort aims to develop novel treatments and devices for cardiovascular diseases, while funding undergraduate and graduate student research, establishing UNO as a leader in biomechanics-related prototype development.





“In CFAM, we are dedicated to inspiring the creative expression and cultural growth of all our students. Art and Art History, Communication Studies, Journalism and Media Communication, Music, Theatre, and Creative Writing all provide unmatched opportunities, skill development, and meaningful experiences for every student while preparing them for their professional fields.”

-Dean Michael L. Hilt, Ph.D.



## COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION, FINE ARTS AND MEDIA

In the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media (CFAM), our students find the right balance of academics and application to prepare them for their career. Whether that means teaching, creating, performing, or communicating—or some combination of those—CFAM graduates know their educational experience will help them make an impact in the world.

### Points of Pride

**Melissa Jackson Burns**, an MFA in Writing graduate student at the School of the Arts, received the prestigious **University of Nebraska Presidential Graduate Fellowship** for the 2024-25 academic year, which includes a \$15,000 stipend from the Elmer C. Rhoden Merit Scholarship.

The **UNO Jazz Ensemble**, featuring José Valentino, won a **Global Music Award Silver Medal** for their performance of "We Are One: Latin Jazz Big Band LIVE" at the February 2024 UNO/OPA Great Plains Jazz Festival, being one of only two student groups recognized among professionals.

School of Communication students have earned national acclaim, with the **MavForensics** team consistently ranking in the top 20, **Public Relations and Advertising** students receiving top industry awards, and **MavRadio** ranked 5th in the nation.

Michael B. Jones, M.D., pledged \$1 Million to establish the **Michael Bruce Jones, M.D., Chair** in the School of the Arts. **Amy Millicent Morris**, Ph.D., Director of the School of the Arts and Professor of Art History, will be named the inaugural recipient.

### Omaha Area Youth Orchestras join UNO

In a recent collaboration, the Omaha Area Youth Orchestras (OAYO) joined the University of Nebraska at Omaha School of Music on July 1, 2024. OAYO has worked closely with Dr. Karen Fannin, Director of the UNO School of Music, on a transition plan. “We are thrilled to welcome the Omaha Area Youth Orchestras to the UNO School of Music,” Fannin said. “OAYO has enriched the lives of thousands of musicians since their founding in 1958 and we look forward to continuing this strong tradition.”



### Summer Music Theatre Academy

The Summer Music Theatre Academy (SMTA) provides high school students with hands-on experience in all aspects of theatre production in a professional, supportive setting. Under the guidance of UNO professors and industry professionals, students engage deeply with Omaha’s arts culture, and community. With performances on campus and at downtown Omaha’s Gene Leahy Mall, SMTA has become a hallmark summer event. SMTA completed its third season performing **Legally Blonde**. Since the academy’s beginning in 2022, SMTA students have preformed in front of an estimated 11,500 people.

The School of Communication is creating programs that engage learners in new and innovative ways. Through fast-track certificate programs such as the courses in Communicating in Remote Work Environments and Power Presentations: Effective Public Speaking Strategies or their sync-flex delivery (simultaneous in-person and synchronous remote) of the Master of Arts in Communication, the School of Communication is responsive to today’s learners.



# COLLEGE OF INFORMATION SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

IS&T is a regional leader supporting the state's workforce development in the tech field. With a student body of 1,412 students, IS&T offers five undergraduate degrees, seven master's degrees, and two Ph.D. degrees. In addition to its largest and most diverse student body in Computer Science, IS&T has several other signature programs, such as Cybersecurity with NSA's designation as a Center of Excellence in Cyber Defense and Cyber Operations, collaborative degrees in Biomedical Informatics and Computer Science Education, Data Science, and the newly rebranded Applied Computing and Informatics Degree. The experiential initiatives and network of corporate and not-for-profit partners allow students to have curriculum experiences with real-life projects and access to summer and year-long internships.

"IS&T is committed to developing a diverse computing workforce for Nebraska through cutting-edge curriculum, integrated student success initiatives, experiential learning opportunities with community partners, and innovative research to address critical and societal problems."

- Dean Martha Garcia-Murillo, Ph.D.



## Points of Pride

- IS&T experienced **8% growth** in undergraduate and **9% growth** in graduate **enrollment** last year, reflecting the rising recognition of tech careers in Nebraska and nationally.
- New **guided transfer pathways** were launched for Metro and Southeast Community College students to seamlessly earn Bachelor's degrees.
- There was **\$4.7M in research expenditures** from over 40 active grants, a 30% increase in proposals.
- Over \$300,000 was raised for **scholarships, activities, and research**, and a classroom renovation for an innovative **code studio** was completed, thanks to a gift from FNBO.
- **Dr. Jorge Fandinno** received a prestigious **NSF CAREER grant**, the second in the university's history, and **Dr. Kwangsung Oh** received an **NSF-EPSCOR First Award**. Four new tenure-track faculty with start in Fall 2024, one of whom holds another NSF CAREER award.

### Nebraska University Center for Cybersecurity (NebraskaCYBER)

NebraskaCYBER has earned NSA designations as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense and Cyber Operations. The center supports academic excellence through NSF-funded scholarships and K-12 camps, along with cybersecurity research funded by many federal agencies to protect our nation's critical infrastructures. For example, Dr. George Grispos is leading a research initiative to educate American Indian food producers about cybersecurity concerns and challenges on modern farms.



### Partnerships and Transfer Pathways

IS&T continues to make education affordable by expanding its partnerships with Metro Community College and hosting IT transfer pathway events to increase awareness of its Computer Science, Management Information Systems, and Cybersecurity programs. It also collaborates with the MetroMAVS initiative to provide students with advising and UNO IS&T experiences. Similar guided pathways are being developed with Southeast Community College.

### AI Technology - IS&T is Ready

IS&T is well-positioned to leverage recent AI technological advances and its convergence in many domains. The faculty's deep AI expertise have formed many impactful interdisciplinary collaborations. For example, Dr. Jorge Fandinno Garcia, focuses on transparent, reliable, and understandable AI systems by enabling formal reasoning with quantitative data, improving their effectiveness and explanatory capabilities.





# COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Empowering individuals and communities through inspiring education, cutting-edge research, and impactful public service, we strive to make a meaningful difference globally and locally.

Dr. Gaylene Armstrong, a renowned expert in criminology and community-engaged research, has been appointed Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service. With a strong track record of leadership and a passion for community-driven initiatives, Dr. Armstrong is poised to bring fresh perspectives and innovative approaches to the College. She is committed to advancing the College's mission and vision, and is excited to collaborate with faculty, students, and community partners to drive positive change.



## Points of Pride



The **Department of Gerontology** is now home to 4 Fellows in the **Gerontological Society of America** with this year's addition of Dr. Lindsey Wilkinson. She will be recognized at the national meeting in November 2024.



The **Goodrich program** continues its robust support of students demonstrating an 87% six-year graduation rate.



With accreditation from the **Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA)** and the **Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)**, our programs ensure that students receive a high-quality education.



Academic excellence is evident in our doctoral granting degree programs, with **Criminology and Criminal Justice** ranked 13th overall and **Public Administration** ranked 26th overall.



Experiential learning opportunities are expanding through **internships, practicum classes, service-learning projects**, and graduate level **capstone courses** in which students generate and explore solutions to current community challenges.



Dee-Dee Gaston, student in social work, is founder of **Q.U.E.E.N.S Butterfly House**, a safe-house for women re-entering society ensuring post-incarceration success and positively impacting the community.



## Researching to Reducing Labor Trafficking

The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice leads CPACS in academic excellence with more than 37 externally funded research grants and contracts. Of state and national importance is an exemplary effort led by Drs. Teresa Kulig and Sadaf Hashimi in Nebraska. Their research team of students and faculty are working to enhance actionable responses to identifying and reducing labor trafficking while also assessing the impact of trafficking crimes on survivors. Through this and many other experiences, students are gaining real-time experience in shaping policy and practices that enhance the safety of our Nebraska communities.

## Aviation Institute

Opportunity for commercial flight careers nationwide has led to unprecedented student interest in our Aviation Institute programs. Through concentrations in air transportation administration, professional flight and uncrewed aircraft systems, students have unparalleled experiences. The institute has state of the art flight simulator training to complement their time in the air. Dr. Victor Huang is ensuring operational safety through his recent funded research project "Towards Smart Aviation: Harnessing Intelligent, Data-driven Technologies and Analytics for Elevated Flight Safety and Airport Operations."



## Grace Abbott School of Social Work

As Nebraska's largest social work program, the Grace Abbott School of Social Work is gaining national recognition for social policy research and workforce development. Over 90% of Nebraska's social workers are graduates! The Grace Abbott Training and Supervision Academy provided over 400 supervision sessions and issued more than 6,000 continuing education credits to social workers and mental health practitioners.





# GRADUATE STUDIES

## GRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENT SNAPSHOT

3,156 Total graduate students

742	632	399	1,083	2,073	\$65,960	380
<small>New graduate students</small>	<small>Ethnic and racially underrepresented graduate students</small>	<small>International graduate students</small>	<small>Full-time graduate students</small>	<small>Part-time graduate students</small>	<small>Awarded through a variety of scholarships</small>	<small>Graduate assistants</small>



“This is an exciting time to be in higher education and graduate education in particular. The future will continue to be about meeting students where they’re at and offering the programming they need to be successful while meeting the workforce needs of the state, region, and country.”

- Dean Juan Casas, Ph.D.



### Points of Pride

- UNO set a new **graduate enrollment record**, with 3,156 students enrolled across 90+ certificate and degree programs.
- The first full academic year offering prospective graduate students the “**Fridays at UNO with Graduate Studies**” reached over 75 students.
- Over 20 campus partners join the **New Graduate Student Welcome Event** each August to ensure new students know all the UNO resources available to them.
- Expanded the partnership with the Center for Faculty Excellence and the Writing Center to continue offering **professional development** opportunities to graduate students.
- Enhanced recruitment efforts for **international students** through UNO’s partnership with Study Group.

# LIBRARY SERVICES

The Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Library secured over \$20,000 in grants and \$77,580 in support for Open Educational Resources (OER). The library team delivered twenty presentations at regional and national conferences, and welcomed over a quarter of a million visitors to its spaces, services, technology, and collections.



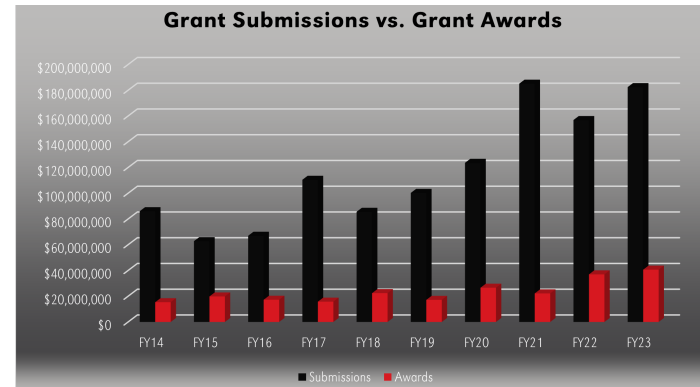
David Richards  
Dean of Library Services



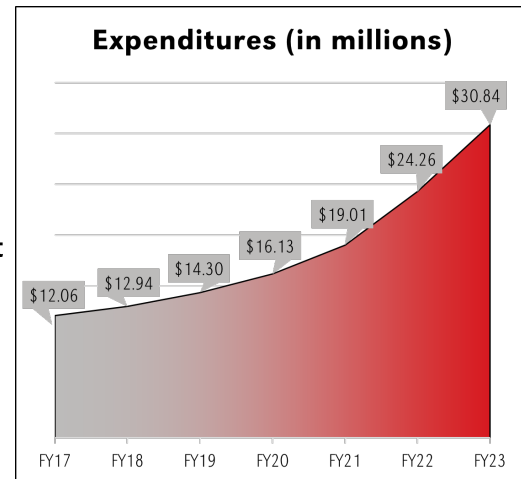
### Points of Pride

- The Library has become home to the **Kripke-Veret Collection**, a hallmark special collection of Judaica books, donated by the Jewish Federation of Omaha.
- The **Open Educational Resources** saved students over \$404,826 in textbook costs and has had a cumulative savings of \$2,169,500.
- Debora Heard, UNO Libraries and Department of Black Studies, and Claire Du Laney, UNO Libraries, were 2023 **Champion of History Award** winners through History Nebraska.
- The Library received the 2024 **Library Excellence in Access and Diversity Award** from *Insight Into Diversity* magazine, the largest and oldest diversity and inclusion publication in higher education.
- The Library Friends **Collections Uncorked** event held in March 2024 raised over \$16,000.





## RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY



### Achievements and Highlights

The research and creative activity of almost 200 graduate and undergraduate students were showcased at the **16th Annual Student Research and Creative Activity Fair**, through presentations, performances, and exhibits.

ORCA and the UNO Alumni Association are proud to collaborate through the new **College Research and Creative Activity Awards**, presented to tenured, graduate faculty.

The **High School Internship Program** provides pathways to research and creative activity for high school students by funding high school interns to work on faculty research and/or creative endeavors.

### Nebraska EPSCoR FIRST Cohort Sessions

- 8 faculty applied for the **Nebraska EPSCoR FIRST** grant award
- 7 faculty were invited to prepare an **NSF CAREER-like proposal** to submit in September.



### Projects and Initiatives

The Office of Sponsored Programs hosted two **Grants Insight Group** sessions for **UNO staff** to empowering staff with knowledge and resources.

ORCA hosted two **Grant Writing** sessions for **faculty**, providing an overview of UCRCA and NRI grant programs, clarifying goals and evaluation criteria and best practices in grant writing to enhance competitiveness for external funding.

### Goals for 2024-25

Continue growing research expenditures by 10% or more/year.

Enhance faculty cohort programs focused on the National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER; National Institutes of Health (NIH) (R01/R15); National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) applications.

Increase student participation in intensive graduate fellowship programs: National Science Foundation (NSF), Graduate Fellowship Research Program (GFRP), and National Institutes of Health (NIH) F Series.



## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS



### Developing Global Partnerships

- 19 new partnerships and 4 new credit-bearing pathway programs
- UNO is a Founding member of the Kazah-U.S. Universities Consortium
- Launched a partnerships with StudyGroup to expand UNO's global recruitment



*UNO students enjoy Fun-Plex waterpark during a 'Discover with Durango' 2024 field trip with UNO Spirit, Tradition, and Signature Events*

### Highlights

- 376 International Students participated in internships and post-degree employment opportunities
- 25 countries attended Intensive English Language at UNO (ILUNO)
- New International students up 7%
- Congratulations to Dr. Jodi Benenson (Public Administration) on receiving the 2024 Faculty Excellence in Engagement Award

### Education Abroad Snapshot

- 326 UNO students studied abroad
- 46 students studied for an entire semester or academic year
- 19 students attended Short-Term study abroad programs
- 7 students joined in Virtual Programs
- 212 students enrolled in UNO Global Courses
- 42 participants attended Athletic /Performing Arts study away Programs
- 30 UNO faculty and staff led global programs

### School Impact Project with Nebraska Department of Education (NDE)

Internationalization in Nebraska Communities

In October 2023, the Center for Afghanistan and Regional Studies began courses for more than 290 Nebraska educators developed to address the gaps in cultural understanding and better support newcomer refugee students and families from Afghanistan. Besides offering practical content on topics related to Afghan culture, the course covers topics related to general knowledge about refugees and the trauma of displacement as well as the stress of resettlement and acculturation. This broader knowledge will be relevant to support other refugee populations.



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The generosity of our community's philanthropists is a cornerstone of our success, enabling us to reach new heights and transform lives. In 2023-2024 the following scholarships, professorships, chairs, and projects were funded by generous community donors.

The College of Arts and Sciences **Rinn Returning Student Fund** to encourage students to return to UNO for degree completion.

The **Kasher Scholars Program**, a cohort-based scholarship initiative aimed at recruiting high-achieving Physics majors.

Larry Bradley, Goodrich Scholar and long-time supporter of UNO, established the first **Endowed Professorship for the Goodrich Scholarship Program**.

The **Nebraska Early Literacy Project** in the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, along with a scholarship to aid participation in the Dyslexia Specialist Certificate program.

The **FNBO Code Studio** was renovated, creating a modern professional technology space for college students in the Peter Kiewit Institute.

Extended the **CBA Prep Academy**, enhancing academic skills, exposure, and college pathways for high school participants, including first-generation, low-income, and/or underrepresented students.

The **Michael Bruce Jones, M.D. Chair in the School of the Arts** to support arts education at UNO, with Amy Millicent Morris, Ph.D., Director of the School of the Arts and Professor of Art History, named as the inaugural recipient.

The **Davis-Schnauber Family Scholarship** to support students in ROTC, Music, Business, and Special Education.

Susan Bowen Punches established support for the Chancellor's Area of Greatest Need, honoring her family with the naming of the **Bowen Family Student Patio** near the Arts and Sciences Hall.

The **Holistic Development Initiative** for student-athletes, enabling the hiring of a full-time Clinical and Sports Psychologist. The initiative facilitated 1,025 individual appointments and 15-20 hours of team sport psychology training sessions throughout the academic year.

# THOMPSON LEARNING COMMUNITY (TLC)

## Since 2008

- 3,715 first-time, first year Buffett Scholars
- 1,971 Buffett Scholars have graduated with 2,166 degrees
- Over \$21 million in grant funding from the Buffett Foundation

## During 2023-2024

- 285 new Buffett Scholars
- 264 returning in Fall 2024 (93% retention rate)
- 203 Buffett Scholars graduated
- Launched **Mav Mentors** in DASH, CBA, IS&T, Exploratory Studies, CFAM, and CPACS

## Coming in Fall 2024

- 1,238 active Buffet Scholars at UNO
- 4,000th first-time Buffett Scholar starting at UNO
- Embedding the **First-Year Courses** into the Colleges



Photo credit: Cadet Jacob Limb

# AIR FORCE ROTC

## Cadet Achievements

- **Cadet Faith Grelk** recognized as the #2/198 trainers at the encampment, earning a USAA scholarship.
- **Cadet Tyler Smith** selected as 1 of 12 cadets nationwide to serve as a cadet training mentor.
- **Cadet Julian Fichpain** was 1 of 14 nationally selected cadets to attend a professional development trip to the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program.
- **Commissioned into the US Air Force**
  - 5 Nurses, 2 Pilots, 1 Combat Systems Officer, 1 Nuclear and Missile Operations Officer, and 1 Physicist



## Key Achievements

- Top-10 highest CGPA standing of 145 AFROTC Detachments for the 2nd year.
- AFROTC enrollment up 29% from last year.
- Air Force UH-1N helicopter landed in the Pep Bowl.
- Mary Kjeldgaard (Administrative Assistant) awarded the Unsung Hero Award.
- Technical Sergeant Caleb Hager awarded AFROTC Non-commissioned officer of the Quarter.
- UNO hosted the Annual Drill Meet that welcomed 7 high schools, 107 JROTC cadets, and 8 active duty military judges.

## Projects and Initiatives

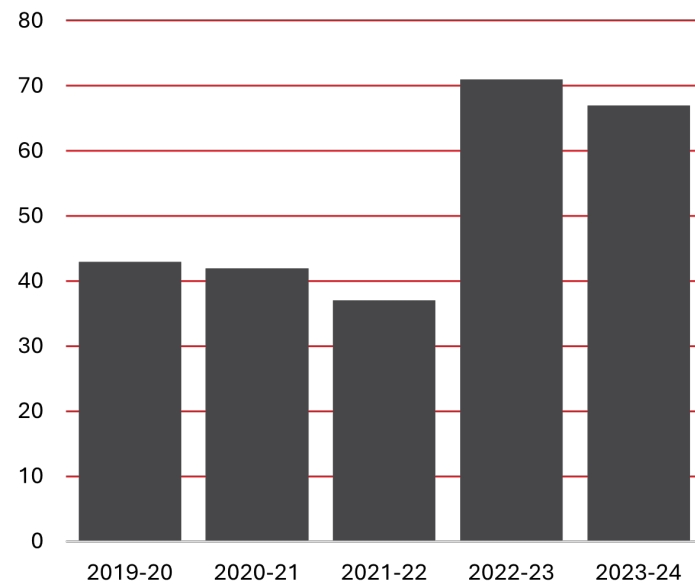
- Air Force awarded scholarships up to \$18K to ALL junior and senior cadets named in honor of Brigadier General Charles McGee, a fighter pilot and Tuskegee Airmen during World War II.
- Detachment 470 is teaming up with UNO television to create a recruiting video to share the cadet experience with our community and the world.
- The color guard operated at over 30 events, including presenting the colors at the College World Series, a Storm Chasers Game, UNO and Creighton sporting events, veterans and military appreciation events.
- The cadets participated Tornado Aid and Cleanup, supporting the Lincoln Airshow and the USSTRATCOM military ball.



# UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM



Honors Program Graduates



## 2023-24 Highlights

- Just over 500 students in the Honors Program in 2023-24
- 67 Honors Graduates
- 93% of students undertaking Honors work during their first semester graduate successfully in four years.



1 in 4

Honors students are people of color

9%

of Honors students have military affiliation



Over 50%

of Honors students live on campus

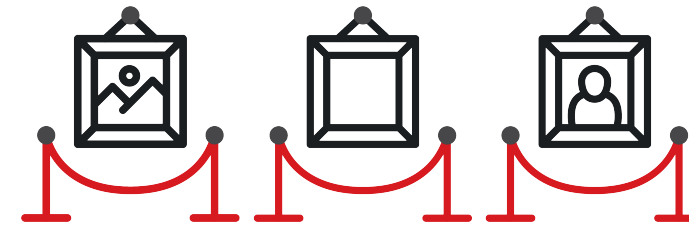
Honors students are enrolled in

55+

different majors across the University

# SAMUEL BAK MUSEUM: THE LEARNING CENTER (SBMLC)

The Museum is a place where art is a preface to conversations about human rights, Holocaust education, and genocide. We collaborate with all facets of UNO by providing partnerships for internships, degree completion, workforce development, community engagement, and social mobility.

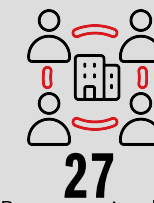


10,723

Total Attendance in 2023-2024

3,229

K-12 Students and Educators



27  
Partners in the Community



45  
Partners within UNO



17  
School Districts in Nebraska & Iowa

# OFFICE OF NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

UNO is proud of the exceptional students who receive national fellowships and scholarships, a testament to the dedication and support provided by ONFS.

## Barry Goldwater Scholars



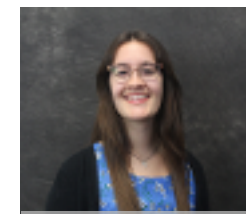
Tai Prauner

Molecular and Biomedical Biology (Chemistry minor)  
Spanish for Health Sciences (Medical Humanities minor)

Isabelle Weber

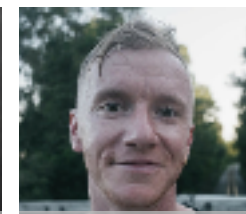
Neuroscience, Molecular and Biomedical Biology (Chemistry and Medical Humanities minors)

## Fulbright Students as English Teaching Assistants



Courtney Brink

Early Childhood Inclusive Education Bachelors  
Teaching in Germany



Tyler Ayres

Critical and Creative Thinking Masters  
Teaching in Taiwan

## Phi Kappa Phi Graduate Fellowship



Kaylee Lahti

Business Administration and Spanish Bachelors



# DUAL ENROLLMENT

UNO's dual enrollment program aims to increase access to higher education for Nebraska students and families, decrease costs, and provide a bridge to a four-year college degree by providing affordable access to high-quality UNO credit-bearing courses at high schools throughout the Omaha metropolitan region and beyond.

## Highlights

 nearly **4,000** students enrolled in dual enrollment courses

 with almost **300** dual enrollment teachers

 at **42** partner high schools.

## Initiatives

In 2023-24, the dual enrollment program provided more than \$450,000 directly to partner high schools to support initiatives designed to maintain high-quality dual enrollment courses and increase student participation.

UNO has been proactive in identifying solutions to the region's shortage of dual enrollment teachers. Faculty have developed graduate-level coursework and partnerships tailored to high school teachers in high-demand areas like Computer Science Education, Math Education, English, Economics Education, History, and Government.

UNO's dual enrollment program has covered the cost of graduate tuition for nearly 100 Nebraska high school teachers over the past 5 years to complete advanced coursework needed to qualify to teach dual enrollment courses in local high schools.

# CENTER FOR FACULTY EXCELLENCE (CFE)

## Faculty Coaching

CFE launched Faculty Coaching, a pilot program centered on solution-focused, holistic faculty development, in April 2023. Coaching is based on individual needs and topics of interest and participant autonomy to choose and complete goals. Full-time faculty are eligible for five free, confidential sessions per semester. To date, 45 individuals have participated with an average of four coaching sessions/participant. A coaching coordinator, Monica Blizek, and a faculty coach, Brigitte Ryalls, facilitate the program.

"I have taken several big steps as a result of coaching. I feel more empowered and less alienated at work. This shift has not gone unnoticed by my colleagues and family. I now talk about what the next decade will look like rather than how to survive the week."

## TANDEM (Thoughtful Advice. Nurtured Diversity. Engagement Mentorship.)

"I am so thankful for the interactions I've had with my mentor – we remain connected and have had many fruitful conversations. My professional life is definitely better for knowing my mentor."

The program transitioned from its pilot status to become a standard offering of the Center for Faculty Excellence that facilitates interdepartmental mentoring of second and third-year faculty. Fifty-six faculty members participated in 2023-24. Since its inception three years ago, over 70 faculty members have participated with 53% from under-represented groups.

 **189** faculty participated in writing and research support

 **46** faculty participated in TABS

 **183** faculty participated in faculty search training efforts

 **130** faculty participated in Communities of Practices

 **71** faculty participated in faculty on-boarding



# ▶▶▶ FORWARD TOGETHER

As we look ahead, the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) is poised to embrace the future with confidence and determination. The achievements and milestones highlighted in this report reflect our collective efforts and dedication to excellence.

Moving forward, we will continue to innovate, engage, and grow, guided by our strategic initiatives. Our commitment to reforming general education, enhancing academic programs, expanding experiential learning, retaining our exceptional faculty, growing strategic areas, and fostering global partnerships will shape a brighter future for UNO.

Together, we will navigate the challenges and opportunities of an ever-changing world, ensuring that UNO remains a beacon of knowledge, inclusivity, and impact. Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. Let's move forward together, with optimism and resolve, to create an even greater tomorrow.







UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Omaha




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